

sees the stands that we are taking on behalf of pregnant mothers and their families, providing justice and codifying common sense.

There is nothing in Laci and Conner's Law we should hide from. Indeed, so intuitive is the notion that an attack against a pregnant mother involves two victims, so essential to both natural law and basic human experience, that I would venture to guess that even most children in this country just assume that legislation like the Unborn Victims of Violence Act is already on the books.

This is a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker. Of course Laci and Conner's Law should be passed. Of course this House and this Nation can stand up for pregnant women and their families and acknowledge the injuries their children suffer at the hand of violent predators and set penalties accordingly.

Defending the family is part of our core agenda in this Congress, and passing Laci and Conner's Law is one of the ways we can fulfill it. After all, what kind of moral leaders would we be if, given the choice, we rejected the natural instinct of all people that they all have to recoil at news of violence against pregnant mothers?

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, come Thursday's vote, we will not have to find out.

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION SHOULD RESIGN

(Ms. MCCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Secretary of Education branded the 2.7 million teacher-strong National Education Association a "terrorist organization."

Mr. Paige's words were a hateful comment, beneath the dignity of any Cabinet Secretary. Rather than trying to achieve the highest standards of civility, setting the best example for American children, Mr. Paige's "teachable moment" was to stand in the White House and vilify the NEA and America's teachers by labeling them terrorists, in effect, enemies of America.

This vile language was no joke. It was not insensitive. In fact, it was a deliberate attack, an example of neo-McCarthyism at its worst.

The Secretary's words harmed public education, and they were clear in their intent to threaten the millions of American citizens that the NEA honorably represents.

It is time for Mr. Paige to resign. Resign now, sir.

THANKING ERIC THOMPSON FOR 35 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a South Carolinian who has been a model of public service for the last 35 years. Eric Thompson of North Augusta, South Carolina, retired this January from his post as executive director of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, where he had worked since 1981.

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The Council is a regional planning and development organization serving 6 counties and 45 incorporated municipalities.

Mr. Thompson has helped the Lower Savannah Council secure nearly \$172 million in State and Federal grants for cities and counties in the region, which includes Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties. He has worked previously as part of planning commissions for Aiken and Brunswick-Glynn County, and currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Development Organizations, where he has served as president.

South Carolina is so thankful for Eric Thompson's dedication to our State, and I ask all of my colleagues to join me in commending him for his commitment to public service.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11.

BLUE DOG DEFICIT UPDATE

(Mr. STENHOLM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, today we owe the country \$7,078 billion, being swept under the rug every day. Foreign holdings of our debt now total \$1.5 trillion. Foreign investors financed 70 percent of our record \$373 billion debt last year. In January of 2002, foreign investors held \$1 trillion of our U.S. debt; today it is \$1.5 trillion. Japan holds \$545 billion, and China holds \$149 billion of our debt. By far, the United States' largest foreign aid program is our interest payments to foreign investors, yet we continue to not want to change our economic game plan to do something about it. The largest single debt tax increase in the history of our country is being perpetrated on us today.

Mr. Speaker, \$7,078 billion, that is what we owe today.

MAKE TAX RELIEF PERMANENT

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the economic numbers we are seeing right now do not lie. Our economy is growing and jobs are being created, but to stay on that track, we need to keep our economy growing. Growth encourages busi-

ness expansion and entrepreneurship, both of which lead to new jobs, and tax relief encourages growth. That is what we have seen this year.

When small businesses and working families keep more of their own money, they spend it far better than we do here in Washington. But many, even many here in this Chamber today, do not believe that. So we will hear lots of talk about repealing tax cuts and spending more. But, Mr. Speaker, that is the wrong way to go. Raising taxes will hurt this economy. Lower tax rates on American families will unleash the full potential of this economy.

We need to let American workers keep the reward for their hard work. We need to act this year to make the tax relief permanent. This will encourage long-term growth and allow families and small business owners to plan with confidence for the future.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR JANE NELSON

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Texas State Senator Jane Nelson on her recent receipt of the Nathan Davis Award for Outstanding Government Service from the American Medical Association.

Senator Nelson is a Republican who represents senate district 12 in Texas. She is my senator. She was elected to the Texas Senate in 1992 after serving two terms on the Texas State Board of Education. At the board of education, future Senator Nelson led her colleagues on a fight to correct over 5,000 errors in textbooks across the State of Texas.

During all of this activity, Senator Nelson has also managed to own and operate an aircraft component manufacturing firm with her husband Mike, while raising a son and four daughters, three of whom I delivered.

Senator Nelson has made health care policy and advocacy for Texas patients a top priority. She wrote Texas' first comprehensive privacy law, she fought for HMO reform, and wrote the law returning physical education classes to help fight childhood obesity.

In the most recent session of the State legislature, Senator Nelson worked for liability reform in the health care industry and for relief of rising health care costs. She also sponsored prompt pay legislation, which simply requires HMOs to pay their bills on time.

This is definitely a high honor for Senator Nelson, as it would be for any elected official. In the years to come, hopefully, the Nation will be honoring more great leaders such as Senator Nelson for their hard work and dedication to worthy causes as health care reform.

Senator Nelson, congratulations. I regard you as a friend and mentor, and,

certainly, Texas physicians have no better friend in the State legislature, and you have been a true friend to the family of medicine across the country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LEACH). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

SALT CEDAR AND RUSSIAN OLIVE CONTROL ASSESSMENT AND DEMONSTRATION ACT

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2707) to direct the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, acting through the U.S. Forest Service, to carry out a demonstration program to assess potential water savings through control of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive on forests and public lands administered by the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2707

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Assessment and Demonstration Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) SECRETARIES.—The term "Secretaries" means the Secretary of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) WESTERN UNITED STATES.—The term "Western United States" refers to the States defined by the Act of June 17, 1902 (commonly known as the 1902 Reclamation Act; 43 U.S.C. 371 et seq.), which includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

SEC. 3. ASSESSMENT OF SALT CEDAR AND RUSSIAN OLIVE INFESTATION IN WESTERN UNITED STATES.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than one year after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out this section, the Secretaries shall complete an assessment of the extent of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive invasion in the Western United States.

(b) CONTENT.—The assessment shall include the following:

(1) To the extent practicable, documentation of the quantity of water lost due to the infestation.

(2) Documentation of the quantity of water saved due to various control methods, including the portion of saved water that returns to surface water or groundwater supplies and at what rates.

(3) Determination of the optimum control method for the various land types and land uses.

(4) Determination of what conditions indicate the need to remove such growth and the

optimal methods for disposal or use of such growth.

(5) Determination of methods to prevent the regrowth and reintroduction of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive and to reestablish native species.

(c) REPORT ON ASSESSMENT.—

(1) PREPARATION AND CONTENT.—The Secretaries shall prepare a report containing the results of the assessment. The report shall identify long-term management and funding strategies that could be implemented by Federal, State, Tribal, and private land managers and owners on all land management types to address the invasion of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive. The report shall also identify deficiencies or areas for further study and where actual field demonstrations would be useful in the control effort.

(2) SUBMISSION.—The Secretaries shall submit the report to the Committee on Resources and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

(d) SUPPORT FOR IDENTIFICATION OF LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING STRATEGIES.—The Secretaries may make grants to institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations (or both) with an established background and expertise in the public policy issues associated with the control of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive to obtain technical experience, support, and recommendations related to the identification of the long-term management and funding strategies required to be included in the report under subsection (c)(1). Each grant awarded under this subsection may not be less than \$250,000.

SEC. 4. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FOR CONTROL OF SALT CEDAR AND RUSSIAN OLIVE IN WESTERN STATES.

(a) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—

(1) PROJECTS REQUIRED.—Based on the results of the assessment and report in section 3, the Secretaries shall initiate a program of not fewer than three demonstration projects in the Western United States designed to address the deficiencies and areas for further study to address the invasion of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive, including the test of additional control methods, identified by the report.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretaries may enter into an agreement with a State in the Western United States to carry out a demonstration project. If the Secretaries select a demonstration project for implementation on National Forest System lands, the Secretary of Agriculture shall be responsible for implementation of the project.

(b) ELEMENTS OF PROJECTS.—

(1) DESIGN AND SCALE.—Each demonstration project shall be designed with integrated methods and adaptive management strategies and carried out over time frames and spatial scales large enough to accomplish the goals laid out in the report.

(2) SCIENTIFIC REVIEW.—Before being carried out, the methods and strategies proposed for each demonstration project shall be subject to review by scientific experts, including non-Federal experts, selected by the Secretaries. The Secretaries may use existing scientific review processes to the extent they comply with this requirement.

(c) PROJECT COSTS AND COST SHARING.—The total cost of each demonstration project may not exceed \$7,000,000, including the costs of planning, design, implementation, revegetation, maintenance, and monitoring. In the case of a demonstration project conducted on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretaries may accept, but not require, funds or in-kind contributions, including State agency provided services. The

Federal share of the costs of any activity on private lands funded under the project shall be no more than 75 percent of the total cost of the activity.

(d) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—During the period in which the demonstration projects are carried out, the Secretaries shall submit to the congressional committees specified in section 3(c)(2) an annual report describing—

(1) the demonstration projects;

(2) the progress made in carrying out the projects during the period covered by the report; and

(3) the costs of the projects under subsection (c).

(e) MONITORING.—Demonstration projects shall include the following:

(1) Documentation of the quantity of water saved due to various control methods, including the portion of water saved that returns to surface water or groundwater supplies and at what rates.

(2) Optimal revegetative states to prevent the regrowth and reintroduction of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive and to reestablish native species.

(f) COOPERATION.—The Secretaries shall use the expertise of their various agencies, as well as other Federal agencies, institutions of higher education, State and local governments and political subdivisions thereof, including soil and water conservation districts, and Indian tribes, which are actively conducting assessments on or implementing Salt Cedar and Russian Olive control activities.

SEC. 5. RELATION TO OTHER AUTHORITY.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect, or otherwise bias, the use by the Secretaries of other statutory or administrative authorities to plan or conduct Salt Cedar or Russian Olive control and eradication that is not planned or conducted under this Act.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretaries \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2005 to conduct the assessment required by section 3.

(b) GRANTS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretaries \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2005 to award as grants under section 3(d).

(c) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretaries \$18,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2005 through 2009 to carry out the program of demonstration projects under section 4.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2707, the Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act, provides for the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to carry out a demonstration program